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# INDIANA JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS INDIANAPOLIS

# RETIRED GUARDIAN



## First In, Last Out

219th BFSB  
returns home  
from iraq







THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
MAJ. GEN. R. MARTIN UMBARGER

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The Indiana National Guard Public Affairs Office appreciates any and all feedback from the Guard community; comments, suggestions, critiques. Please direct this input via email to:

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On the Cover: Approximately 150 Soldiers of the 219th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade headquartered in Franklin, Ind., return home to Indianapolis from deployment to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn, Nov. 28, and Nov. 29, 2011.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## Holidays Retired Mailing List is Attached!

To add your contact info to this list, please  
contact the Indiana Joint Forces Public Affairs Office at 317-247-3222



Protocol Officer Christy Ruzga

**Letter from the Editor:** Thank you all for your feedback on the changes to the Retired Guardian. Filling Charlie Dawson's shoes has been no easy task and continues to be a welcomed challenge. Again, we are undergoing change, as I, Christy Ruzga, your new Protocol Officer, take over the reigns of this publication.

I will also be working with retired Brig. Gen. Jim Wilson of the National Guard Association of Indiana to reach those who have retired from our ranks and are interested in becoming members of the NGAI. He heads up the Retiree Committee of the NGAI and is a wonderful asset to get the word out about information important to retired members.

We are currently purging our list of retirees to be sure we have the most current information possible. We know there are errors, and we encourage you to please contact us with any updated information for yourself or a friend and I will be sure to correct it on our list.

Another area I am here to assist you with is for members who have passed away. I need to know your most current email address. You can email me at [christy.l.ruzga@us.army.mil](mailto:christy.l.ruzga@us.army.mil). I will update your information as soon as it is known to me. If you hear of a former member passing away, please contact me so I can inform our members.

Occasionally, I will be on vacation or out of the office. The alternate number for you to contact is 317-247-3222. This is our secretary, Ms. Carol Marrow. If she cannot assist you right away, she will take a message and I will get back to you when I return.

A few things you can expect to see over the course of the next few issues after reviewing your invaluable input are the return of the "Taps" section, "Promotions & Retirements" section, and more "From the Hill," state and federal. Also, the Retired Guardian Facebook will be more frequently updated. Please go to <http://www.facebook.com/TheRetiredGuardian> and "LIKE" us.

Please continue to provide us with feedback at our email address [retiredguardian@gmail.com](mailto:retiredguardian@gmail.com), the Retired Guardian Facebook page, with telephone calls and letters. This is your publication, and we want to do our best to cater it to your preferences.



# Indiana Guardsmen return home

## They represent some of the last troops to return from Operation New Dawn

**By Sgt. John Crosby**  
Indiana Guard Public Affairs

INDIANAPOLIS – Approximately 150 Soldiers of the 219th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade headquartered in Franklin, Ind., returned home to Indiana from the Iraqi desert climate to rain and cold sleet Monday, Nov. 28, 2011, and Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2011.

The unit deployed to southern Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn in March. The team conducted reconnaissance and surveillance operations for United States Forces - Iraq priority intelligence requirements.

President Barack Obama had stated the U.S. has begun the process of winding down operations conducted in Iraq and bringing troops home. This homecom-

ing is one of many taking place across the National Guard and active-duty forces throughout the final months of 2011, part of the overall drawdown in Iraq.

Indiana National Guard troops have supported overseas contingency operations in Iraq since operations began in 2003. Hoosiers are beginning to come home after years of sacrifice and hard work to stabilize the country.

"It was interesting to watch the plans changing; from keeping 20,000 troops there, to 10,000 to 5,000 to zero," said Col. Ivan Denton, commander of the 219th. "I'm just happy we can bring all of our Soldiers home in time for the holidays."

The Soldiers returning home are from several units that make up the 219th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade including Headquarters Company, 2219th Brigade Support Company and 438th Signal

Company, some of the last Soldiers to return home from the conflict.

The Guard Soldiers reported to Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center for demobilization training following the homecoming celebration.

"It's been a long nine months," said Indiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Rachel Jensen, 76th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. She reunited with her boyfriend of three years, Sgt. James Davis, as he returned home with the 219th. "I'm so ecstatic about him coming home."

Jensen and Davis met on their first deployment to Iraq with the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2008. Since both are Indiana National Guard Soldiers, she said they share the utmost respect for each

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Indiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Jonathan Theriac reunites with his daughter Lylah, and wife Caitlyn

Photos by Sgt. John Crosby  
Indiana Guard 1st Lt. Matt Hygema hugs his wife Christine and son Grant



other's professions and understand the time away from home.

"We have a really good personnel and professional relationship," said Jensen. "We mentor each other, and we're able to separate that from our relationships. We can hold a lot of realistic and even stern conversations about what it is we do, it really keeps our relationship strong."

Davis, served as senior medic for Troop A, 2-152 Infantry Battalion headquartered in Bluffton, Ind., while deployed in Iraq. He shared his girlfriend's enthusiasm as they reunited.

"It was a unique experience there, we shut down a lot of FOBs (forward operating bases) while were there, moving our way down south and out to Kuwait," said Davis. "It was a difficult last six months. We are just so proud of everything we've done."

"It was fun to come back to the cold weather and snow," said Davis. "We're looking forward to spending time with our families for the holidays and moving on, our focus now is reintegration with our families and maintaining a positive chain of support for our Soldiers returning home."

Denton, the brigade commander agreed, conveying a message to his Soldiers main source of support.

"Thank you so much to the families of our Soldiers," said Denton. "Without your support, none of this would have been possible."

Although most members of the 219th have returned home, some are still serving in Iraq. All are scheduled to return home before the new year.



*Photos by Sgt. John Crosby*  
Indiana National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick Day holds his wife Karen upon returning home from deployment.

## Osteoarthritis Finding Could Pave Way for Prevention

WASHINGTON – Challenging long-held notions that osteoarthritis is a result mainly of wear and tear on the joints, researchers led by Dr. William H. Robinson of the Department of Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System and Stanford University have provided new insights into the immune-system changes that may trigger cartilage breakdown. Their report appears in the Nov. 6 online edition of *Nature Medicine*.

"This research can lead to a better quality of life for Veterans and others with osteoarthritis," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "This is an example of how VA's research program can lead to many significant breakthroughs in health care."

Working with samples from humans with osteoarthritis and mice, the research team found that the complement system, a group of proteins that move freely through the bloodstream, plays an important role in the development and spread of osteoarthritis. When functioning normally, the complement system is an important part of the body's immune system, killing harmful bacteria and cells infected by viruses when it is called upon to do so.

The researchers discovered that one component of the complement system, called the membrane attack complex, or MAC, is formed and activated in the joints of both humans and mice affected by osteoarthritis. They believe that when the MAC is aberrantly activated in the joints, a phenomenon called "dysregulation," it induces low-grade inflammation and the production of

enzymes that break down cartilage and result in the development of osteoarthritis.

"It's a paradigm change," says Robinson, a physician-researcher with the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center at the Palo Alto VA and an associate professor of immunology and rheumatology at Stanford. "People in the field predominantly view osteoarthritis as a matter of simple wear and tear, like tires gradually wearing out on a car."

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative arthritis, affects millions of people around the world, usually those who are middle aged or older. The disease is most commonly found in hands, neck, lower back, knees and hips. Currently, there are no therapies available to slow the progress of the disease, and treatment is focused on pain control. Ultimately, some patients with osteoarthritis require joint replacement surgery.

Robinson says one-third of people aged 60 or over suffer from osteoarthritis. VA estimates that more than six million World War II and Korean War Veterans are still living and could be affected. Finding a way to stop the disease from progressing in an aging population could potentially help millions of Veterans. Robinson said he is optimistic about the potential of the new findings. "Right now," he says, "we don't have anything to offer osteoarthritis patients to treat their underlying disease. It would be incredible to find a way to slow it down."



# Spouse Telephone Support Program Demonstrates improved quality of life

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs is implementing a telephone support program to help the spouses of returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans, after a pilot telephone support program showed significant reduction in stress for spouses.

“Returning to civilian life after living in constant combat readiness can be a shocking transition, and it is the immediate family, the spouses and children, who bear that brunt of that transition with those who served,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The more support we can provide to the family, the better the outcome will be for our Veterans.”

The spouse telephone support program, which is part of VA’s Caregiver Support Program, builds spouses’ ability to cope with the challenges that reintegration to civilian society can bring, helps them serve as a pillar of support for returning Veterans, and eases the transition for families after deployments. Spouses in the pilot program reported decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety, with an increase in social

support.

Spouses participate in 12 telephone support groups over six months. The focus is on problem-solving and communication, relationships, mental health and resilience. A trained, nationwide team of VA medical center staff members, including many caregiver support coordinators, will lead the support groups.

Typical issues spouses and Veterans face after deployment include communication difficulties, the need to renegotiate family roles and responsibilities and the added stress of combat related injury. Spouses of Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have reported feeling overwhelmed, depressed, anxious and frustrated.

“Providing support to family caregivers is the right thing for VA to do,” said Dr. Robert Petzel, VA’s under secretary for health. “A simple series of phone calls can do so much good. Certainly, those who fought for our nation and the spouses who allowed them to make that sacrifice deserve this support.”

The program is based on research by VA

researchers Dr. Linda Nichols and Dr. Jennifer Martindale-Adams, of the Memphis VA Medical Center and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Both researchers developed and studied interventions for family members of Veterans and military personnel. Their work with spouses of post-deployed and deployed military personnel is funded through the Defense Health Program, managed by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.

Local caregiver support coordinators are available to assist Veterans and their caregivers in understanding and applying for VA’s many caregiver benefits. VA also has a Web page, [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov), with general information on spouse telephone support and other caregiver support programs available through VA and the community

For more information visit:

[http://iot.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/509](http://iot.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/509)

## VA Announces “Badges for Vets”; Help Vets get Jobs

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the Badges for Vets contest for creating digital badge systems to help veterans translate their military skills into civilian jobs.

“We are looking for ways to make it easy for employers to see Veterans for who they are: highly qualified individuals in any job applicant pool,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We want to help good jobs find Veterans and help Veterans find good jobs.”

A “digital badge” recognizes skills obtained through non-traditional learning, such as work-related training, online courses, and experience. Learners display their badges across the Web, resulting in jobs or formal credit.

“Many recently discharged veterans

earned employable skills during their time in uniform,” said Jonah Czerwinski, director of the VA Innovations Initiative that sponsors the new contest. “They represent high-quality training and real-life experience. We’re looking for new ways for employers to easily identify Veterans who have this training and this experience to fill good jobs in the private sector.”

The VA is joined by the Departments of Education, Energy, and Labor to sponsor the “Badges for Vets” contest as part of the Badges for Lifelong Learning Competition administered by a consortium supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Mozilla Foundation.

The VA Innovations Initiative will award up to three \$25,000 prizes in five categories

to teams that demonstrate they can develop and deliver digital badges representing skills learned in the military that are desired by civilian employers.

Entries in the contest are due by Jan. 12, 2012, and winners will be announced at the Digital Media and Learning Conference in San Francisco, Feb. 28 to March 3.

The initiative solicits the most promising ideas from VA employees, the private sector, non-profit organizations and academia to increase Veterans’ access to VA services, improve the quality of those services, enhance the performance of VA operations and deliver services more efficiently.

For more information about the Badges for Vets Competition visit:

<http://challenge.gov/VAi2/262-badges-for-vets>





# Indiana Guard dedicates Johnson County Armory

By Sgt. John Crosby  
120th Public Affairs Detachment

FRANKLIN, Ind. – Indiana National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, welcomed Gov. Mitch Daniels, U.S. Representative Todd Rokita, and other VIPs to the dedication ceremony for the Johnson County Armory in Franklin, Ind., Nov. 14, 2011.

"We are a community-based force," said Umbarger. "We don't live in forts; we don't live in bases. We live in communities from South Bend to Evansville, from Terre Haute to Richmond. Now, once again, we are a part of the Johnson County community. This isn't our facility; this is your facility. Thank you for welcoming us into your community."

The Johnson County Armory is a 169,000-square-foot, two-story training complex constructed on 39 acres of state acquired property. The new facility is a Base Realignment and Closure project designed to relocate Indiana Army National Guard units and was paid fully by federal funds. The facility is expected to enhance county-wide emergency response and is the largest readiness center in the state.

"The Guards all over this nation have been called in to do

unprecedented things in this past decade," said Daniels. "In this new conflict in which we're engaged, and the new and different vicious threats now to our country, no state can lay claims to have done more than Indiana, whom I believe to be the finest National Guard in the country."

Eight Indiana Army National Guard units with nearly 750 personnel and three U.S. Army Reserve units with approximately 150 personnel will be stationed at the facility. The project cost \$35 million.

The expansive, state-of-the-art facility was built around a 237-year-old oak tree which sits centered on the armory's front lawn, maintaining the integrity and history of the surrounding Indiana farmland. The historic tree is believed to have taken root in 1774, just one year prior to Paul Revere's famous ride, older than the U.S. Army itself.

Local farmer Mark Brown warned Umbarger long before ground was broken at the Armory.

"He said, 'I'm gonna tell you what -- if you hurt that tree, you're gonna get hurt,'" said Umbarger, whom upon seeing the tree agreed that its integrity be preserved. Umbarger in turn told the architect that, "If anything happens to that tree, you got to deal with me."

**Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels speaks at the Johnson County Armory dedication in Franklin, Ind., Nov. 14, 2011**



**Indiana National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, stands at attention before the American flag at the Johnson County Armory dedication in Franklin, Ind., Nov. 14, 2011.**

*Photos by Sgt. John Crosby*



# VETERANS DAY

## REMEMBRANCE



*Photos by Sgt. John Crosby*



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